

Scout Woman of Achievement award and as the city of Dothan's first ever Community Leader of the Year.

Even though she retired from education, she never stopped working to make the world a better place. She launched Communities of Transformation, a program through the United Methodist Church focused on bringing together people from every segment of society to elevate families.

Suffice it to say, Laurel had a positive impact on so many lives throughout her time on this Earth. Whether it was helping a student at her community college reach their full potential or giving hope to a struggling family, so many people owe their success to Laurel Blackwell.

So, on behalf of Alabama's First Congressional District, I want to share my deepest condolences to Laurel's husband, Fred, and their four children. I hope they can all take comfort in knowing that Laurel will live on in the lives of the countless individuals she touched. She will be sorely missed.

TRIBUTE TO MARINE MAJOR ERIC BURKETT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of one of my constituents, United States Marine Major Eric Burkett, from New Castle, Pennsylvania.

Major Burkett was deployed as a member of the 24th Expeditionary Force in Morocco as an Osprey pilot. On April 11, 2012, he was nearly killed in a plane crash, which took the lives of two of his brothers-in-arms.

After coming home to Walter Reed, he lost one of his legs and continues to recover from his numerous injuries to this day. His wife, Melissa, who also is a former marine, has been by his side from day 1, along with their loving six children.

Major Burkett may never fly again, but already with his recovery he soars high above most of us. It was his spirit of service and patriotism that led him to start a program at Fort Belvoir for adaptive archery for his fellow wounded warriors.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a poem penned by Albert Carey Caswell in his honor and in celebration of his new adaptive home, built thanks to the Gary Sinise Foundation.

At this time, I will read an excerpt from this poem:

As his two brothers, angels now up to Heaven
would rise . . .
Coming back home with only his family
upon which to rely . . .
So all by his side . . .
His fine wife, Melissa, and children giving
him the strength to try . . .
As he knew it was time . . .
Time to rebuild his life . . .
Armed with his heart of the strength and
iron will . . .
Giving him the power and courage to nourish
him to instill . . .

The strength to rebuild . . .
Who against all odds our wounded warriors
into that dark night move onward still
. . .

Mr. Speaker, it is people like Major Burkett, whom we celebrate. It is the people who put themselves in danger and harm's way in order to protect the rest of us. I am so proud and humble today to be able to submit this poem in honor of Major Burkett.

OSPREY DE CORPS
(By Albert Carey Caswell)

Osprey
Osprey De Corps
What a magnificent presence oh for sure
And oh what a Osprey De Force
As straight as an arrow heading for
Truer than true into that face of war
To serve and protect
His Country Tis of Thee he'll not neglect
To reek havoc upon the enemy a shear train
wreck
All in those magnificent shades of green
Such Strength In Honor seen
Soaring to new his courage convenes
With such impact this United States Marine.
Oh to be a United States Marine
Who in Strength In Honor are seen
Soaring to new heights to intervene
To fight the fight
What a Osprey De Force awesome sight
Who for all us out on his course took flight
Marines with wings,
one of the most impressive of all things
A sheer work of art this human being
Swooping down upon the enemy for the Na-
tion he so loves
A bulls eye,
hitting his mark all in his battle cry
To vanquish an enemy straight into the
heart of he flies
Going from vertical to horizontal as he
will not be denied
In and out of places others dare not to try
Making those boots on the ground realize
That he's got their backs up on high
Who bleeds Marine green all the time
And loves Marines so much he married a Ma-
rine this guy
One of the baddest of the bad upon which
this Nation relies
Who leads with his heart as he sets
his sights on high
Finding his mark
An Osprey De Corps all in his part
Oh what a force
All out on his most heroic course
A United States Marine burning bright,
this force
When, out on a mission crashed as death was
at his side
As his two brothers,
angels now up to Heaven would rise
Coming back home with only his family
upon which to rely
So all by his side
His fine wife Melissa and children giving him
the strength to try
As he knew it was time
Time to rebuild his life
Armed with his heart of the strength and
iron will
Giving him the power and courage to nourish
him to instill
The strength to rebuild
Who against all odds our wounded warriors
into that dark night move onward
still
As he won the battle but lose his leg
Realizing he'd never fly again on that day
When, he looked at his target and then his
options weighted
So setting his sights high out on his way
A Osprey De Corps on his way to recovery
with tear in eye seemed as he prayed

Bulls eye hitting the mark
As soon he was up and out the door
Leaving behind a town called pity for sure
When, to new heights his heart so soared
To Teach Us
To Reach Us
To Beseech Us All The More
Creating his own Hunger Games,
with his great appetite for recovery he hun-
gered for
And the last time I saw Major Burkett,
I had to look up
Because, with his fine heart way above me he
so soars
His wife Melissa he married up for sure
With four beautiful children he's thinks he is
the luckiest guy and can't ask for
more
Because, the families are the unsung heroes
whenever Johnny goes off to war
Who are the ones who must wait and worry
all the more
And when they come home give them such
comfort for their recovery to insure
And where would all these heroes be if it
were not but for all of these?
The families are our unsung heroes each day
our Lord so sees
Leading the way to recovery
Major Burkett all in those shades of green
Is one magnificent Osprey De Force seen
The pride of Pennsylvania for what he's done
and where he's been
Its courageous men like him off to war our
Nation sends
Who help win all those wars upon whom we
depend
For all that we hold sacred and so love and
adore
A one fine Osprey De Corps
Ooo Rah!

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S AGRICULTURE COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent a rural district in west Texas that is home to 14 million acres of farmland and thousands of hardworking farmers and ranchers. These men and women are feeding and clothing the American people. They are bolstering our economy and they are strengthening our national security.

As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I am committed to delivering results that are in the best interest not only of west Texans, but all Americans. I am doing that with my neighbor and strong leader of the Ag Committee, MIKE CONAWAY.

As we craft the next farm bill, there are a few priorities that, if achieved, will put our United States farmers and ranchers, and our country as a whole, in the strongest competitive position.

The first is that we must maintain America's food and fiber independence from other countries, which, like energy independence, is a national security imperative.

To achieve this objective, we must maintain a viable and responsible safety net for all commodities, which means the committee must work in a bipartisan way to get cotton back in under title I of the farm bill.

We can never again let the World Trade Organization dictate agriculture policy to the United States.